

Factsheet 1098

NLIS Pigs: swine branding, eartags and PigPass NVD

This factsheet provides a brief overview of the requirements for the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Pigs under the NSW Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017. NLIS (Pigs) is Australia's system for identifying and tracing pigs. It is a mob-based system that links pigs with the properties on which they have run. It does this through pig identification (swine brand or NLIS tag), movement documents (PigPass or TSS) and reporting movements in the PigPass database.

Introduction

All pigs (including pet pigs) moving off a property must be permanently identified with either a swine brand or NLIS accredited ear tag which includes the property identification code (PIC) of the property they are moving from. They must also be accompanied by a movement document (PigPass NVD) stating information about the pigs and their property of origin. The information must be recorded in the PigPass database within 48 hours of the movement by the person receiving the pigs.

Why do we need NLIS (Pigs)?

Governments aim to protect human health, and consumers are demanding that purchased food be safe and free from contamination. To maintain public confidence and the reputation of pig meats, rapid identification and traceback is essential in the event of an emergency disease or detection of chemical residues.

Identification of Pigs

Pigs must be permanently identified before they move from a property. Pigs that weigh 25kg or heavier must be identified with a swine brand or an NLIS accredited ear tag including the PIC of the property they are leaving. Pigs weighing less than 25kg must not be branded, instead they must be identified with an accredited NLIS ear tag.

Swine Brands - Obtaining a brand

A swine brand is a 6 digit number derived from the PIC. Every property which has at least one pig must have a PIC. Both the swine brand and PIC are assigned by the District Registrar of the Local Lands Services (LLS) office.

Pig owners may apply to their LLS for a brand and a PIC if their property doesn't already have one. The LLS can also advise where to purchase tattoo equipment.

If you don't have a brand, there are provisions for special or crown brands to be applied by LLS authorised officers. Arrangements can also be made for the slaughter of pigs for private consumption and use. Please contact your local LLS for details.

Branding guidelines

It is important that pigs are branded properly and legibly to meet the both the legal requirements and to ensure the vendor achieves the best market price. Buyers may discriminate against pigs if brands are not easily read by abattoir staff or meat inspectors. If the brand is not legible, it may slow identification and processing, which may also result in incorrect payments.

To ensure clear, legible branding of pigs:

- Never use another owner's brand.
- Ensure the brand is maintained in good operating condition; that is, the brand is clean and needles are sharp and straight and not clogged with old ink or hair.
- Use carbon-based branding ink or paste so the brand will still be readable after the pig is slaughtered and dehaired. Do not use boot polish, stock sprays or bale stencilling ink.
- Press the tattoo into an ink-impregnated pad to ensure needles are covered with ink.
- Strike the tattoo flat onto the pigs shoulder with enough force for skin penetration of all needles. Never strike the pig over the backbone.
- Re-ink the tattoo before branding each pig.
- If pigs are excessively dirty, wash the shoulder area before tattooing.
- Replace brands that are worn, broken or have damaged needles.
- Brand pigs on one or both shoulders within 7 days before leaving the property.

NLIS accredited ear tags

NLIS accredited ear tags are either yellow or orange in colour and are printed with a property's unique PIC, the NLIS logo and 'P' inside a circle. These ear tags are used to permanently identify pigs less than 25 kg liveweight and may be used as an option for pigs greater than 25kg instead of branding.

Breeder tags are yellow and are only used on pigs bred on the property. A pig can only have one breeder tag.

Post-breeder tags are orange and are for pigs that were either born on a different property or when property of birth is unknown. A pig may have more than one post breeder tag.

Movement documents

Pig producers must complete a movement document (PigPass NVD) whenever pigs are moved to a saleyard, showground, abattoir, or to another property for any purpose, even if ownership of the pigs doesn't change. This document accompanies the moving pigs and must be provided to the buyer or person receiving the pigs.

Movement documents provide a history of the movements of mobs of pigs long after the pigs have been moved elsewhere or slaughtered. This is important for disease tracing and export market access.

Movement reporting

You must record movements of pigs onto your property in the PigPass database within 2 days of the movement. Pigs that leave your property are recorded in PigPass by the saleyard, abattoir, show organiser, or pig owner of the new property.

There are two approved forms of movement document: PigPass National Vendor Declaration (NVD), and transported stock statement (TSS).

PigPass is issued by Australia Pork Limited (APL) and is the only approved form that meets the requirements of both the NLIS and the APIQ program run by APL. Producers can obtain PigPass from APL at <http://www.pigpass.com.au> or by phoning 1800 001 458.

A TSS meets NLIS requirements if stock and PIC details are specified. A TSS does not meet APIQ standards or provide information required by processors about conformance with food safety standards. A TSS can be obtained from your LLS.

A producer who is already registered under the PigPass system can obtain an emergency PigPass from APL or a participating stock agent if you have run out of blank forms and need a copy urgently. Some LLS offices may provide an emergency PigPass to producers who are not registered with the PigPass system.

Penalties

Under the *Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017*, penalties can be applied if a person fails to properly identify pigs, provide a correctly completed movement document, or record the movement in the PigPass database within 48 hours.

Also, meat inspectors at abattoirs may prevent slaughter or processing of any pigs which are not branded or are branded illegibly, or which are not accompanied by a completed movement document.

It is an offence for an agent to sell pigs that are not branded, or for any person to buy pigs without a brand. The owner of any pigs at a saleyard which are not correctly branded is guilty of an offence.

Not providing a PigPass or TSS is also an offence. The form must accompany all pigs when they are moved to any other property. An agent must only sell pigs if they are accompanied by a PigPass or TSS.

Producers, including vendors and purchasers, must keep a record of the movement document (PigPass or TSS) for three years. Agents as well as saleyard and abattoir operators must also keep a record of the movement document for three years.

Acknowledgement

This Factsheet is based on an earlier NSW Department of Primary Industries' Primefact entitled 'Pig Branding in NSW' by Greg Roese and Graeme Taylor, former Livestock Officers, Pigs, and Peter Daley, former Senior Regulatory Inspector, all based at Tamworth.

Further information

For more information, please contact your local lands service office, or NSW Department of Industry, Livestock Officers Pigs.

NLIS accredited pig devices:

<https://pigpass.australianpork.com.au/faq>

PICs and swine brands

Local Land Services: 1300 795 299

<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

NSW DPI

Your Reference number PUB18/239

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Industry, 2018. You may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the NSW Department of Primary Industries as the owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (May 2018). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.